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## USAID NURTURE

The U.S. Agency for International Development “USAID Nurture” activity focuses on improving the nutritional status of women and children to reduce child stunting in targeted areas of Laos. The project works to improve community and household nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene practices (WASH).

Despite strong economic growth, Laos still experiences some of the highest rates of child and maternal mortality and malnutrition in Southeast Asia. Lao children remain some of Asia’s most undernourished with national rates of stunting (short for age) at 33 percent and 21 percent of children are underweight.

### IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL PRACTICES

The USAID Nurture activity helps to promote good nutrition for pregnant and lactating women and improve infant and young child feeding practices. The first 1,000 days between pregnancy and age two is a critical period for ensuring healthy child development. USAID Nurture helps to mobilize communities to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of their sanitation environment which helps spur action to address nutrition-related issues resulting from poor sanitation, including reducing the causes of diarrhea and other conditions that limit nutrient absorption, a major cause of stunting.

### EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The project leverages the private sector to ensure scalability and sustainability of improved nutrition and community sanitation practices. It supports the Lao government as it clarifies roles and responsibilities across national, provincial and district levels to help ensure consistency and ownership of multi-sectoral nutrition efforts.

## IMPACT AND RESULTS

USAID Nurture implements activities in every village of two southern provinces of Laos, Savannakhet and Khammouane. Activities to improve nutrition and WASH practices have been implemented in 402 villages; including developing and implementing community action plans for nutrition and WASH and orders placed for latrines and water filters with the private sector.

USAID Nurture has improved the use of quality nutrition and WASH services and facilities by carrying out a three-part nutrition counseling and communication skills training course with 56 health centers and by incorporating nutrition counseling into supervision visits to health centers.

Lastly, USAID Nurture has improved the enabling environment for improved nutrition and WASH by: helping the Government of Laos to develop a National Social Behavior Change Communication Plan; providing key inputs to the Code on Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes; supporting coordination and management capacity building activities at the provincial and district levels; and engaging in quarterly review and work planning meetings with the Government of Laos.

**PARTNER:** USAID Nurture is implemented by Save the Children in partnership with the Government of Laos. This activity benefits from Save the Children's leadership in the implementation of large-scale nutrition programs and local expertise in community-led total sanitation while building on their existing relationships with the Government of Laos.

## CONTACTS

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